

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 7 November 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
7 NOVEMBER 1967

1. South Vietnam

Signs are appearing that rank-and-file members in both the moderate and militant Buddhist camps are becoming fed up with their intransigent leaders. A prominent Buddhist layman says he thinks this points the way toward a solution of continuing factional strife. He explains that if both Tam Chau and Tri Quang are removed, the two factions could then be amalgamated into a "third force" and the Buddhists would be united.

We do not expect this to happen right away, but trends do seem to be in that direction. President Thieu is said to be prepared to look favorably on any changes in the Buddhist charter recommended by a new, reconciled Buddhist grouping.

2. Soviet Union

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3. Uruguay

Devaluation of the peso yesterday is the most significant move Gestido has yet made to combat Uruguay's economic problems. The new rate is 200 pesos to one US dollar; the old rate was 99:1. This is a step recommended last spring by the International Monetary Fund.

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4. Peru

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5. West Germany

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6. Congo

Last week's mercenary incursion into Katanga appears bogged down, at least for the moment.

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Mobutu remains adamant about getting his hands on Schramme and the white mercenaries who fled to Rwanda. At last report, the Congolese president was willing to let Schramme's Katangan supporters take a roundabout way home, but he wants to make an example of the whites.

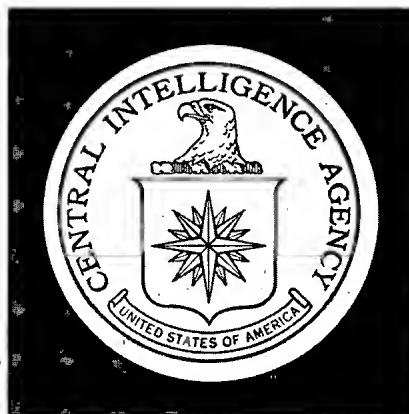
Mobutu may have to look elsewhere for an example, however, as Rwanda's President Kayibanda apparently has decided to go ahead with the evacuation of both mercenaries and Katangans.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Vietnamese Speeches Commemorating Soviet Anniversary: Statements by Vietnamese Communist officials in both Moscow and Hanoi over the weekend were full of high praise for the Soviet revolution, its example for Vietnam and the world, and the importance of Soviet assistance to the Vietnamese revolution. Vietnamese spokesmen also used the occasion to spell out once again Hanoi's unbending terms for a settlement of the war, and to state their conditions for talks with the US.

First Secretary Le Duan, head of Hanoi's delegation to Moscow, provided the major Vietnamese statement in a speech to the Supreme Soviet on Friday. Le Duan recounted the successful course of Communism since the October Revolution, claiming that the Soviet victory has helped the Vietnamese people to find a way to liberation. He said that the Vietnamese people are determined to gain complete victory, chiefly by relying on their own resources but with the help of material support from the fraternal socialist countries.

Le Duan ridiculed what he termed "profuse talk about a false peace" and restated Hanoi's demand that the four points and the program of the Liberation Front serve as the basis for a settlement of the conflict. He added, moreover, that if the US "wishes to reckon with talks with the government, it must first of all, once and for all, and without any conditions, stop the bombing and other acts of war against North Vietnam."

Le Duan's formula for achieving talks--if accurately translated and broadcast--suggests that a further note of rigidity has been injected into Hanoi's position on the war. In the past, authoritative Hanoi spokesmen when speaking specifically of the possibility of talks have called simply for an

"unconditional cessation of the bombing and all other acts of war against North Vietnam." Phrases such as "once and for all," suggesting a permanent halt, have not been used. Should Hanoi report Le Duan's statement on this point as broadcast by Moscow, the North Vietnamese would then appear to be demanding as a prerequisite for talks not only that the US stop the bombings unconditionally, but that such a halt be declared permanent as well.

Back in Hanoi, Politburo member Truong Chinh expressed many of the same sentiments in a speech broadcast on 5 November. Chinh claimed that the success of the Vietnamese revolution is clearly assured by the support of the socialist camp. He stressed that the assistance of the Soviets was of "special importance" and that the services rendered the people of Vietnam by the Soviet Union were "truly great." The occasion for Chinh's speech was a meeting held in honor of a visiting anniversary delegation from the Soviet Union. Vietnamese rhetoric and attendance at this meeting, while in keeping with the occasion, were nonetheless similar in many instances to that afforded a Chinese delegation present during Peking's National Day early last month.

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More from Haiphong: A reporter for the Manchester Guardian filed a report from Haiphong on Sunday describing a harrowing automobile trip he had made one night recently out of Haiphong. Hundreds of trucks were on the road. Suddenly, one of them had an accident and a huge gasoline fire flared up. The reporter's car was stuck in a mile-long tie-up. "I felt that the soaring flames could be seen even in Washington and any minute I expected to hear the diving planes; so, obviously, did the Vietnamese." Before anything happened, however, mobile anti-aircraft units roared up the road, "coming out of the darkness from little side roads to take up positions in the column." Then, the police arrived, the flames died out, and traffic went on.

The reporter claimed to have been given a guided tour of some of Haiphong's heavily bombed areas. He reported seeing "hundreds" of destroyed homes along with the bombed-out factories. He added that the bombing of this populous area may have been a mistake, but, if so, "American marksmanship has fallen off notably."

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North Vietnamese Officer Criticizes US Troops:
American soldiers are easier to fight than the French and without helicopters they cannot do much more than five miles a day, according to Colonel Ha Van Lau, North Vietnam's liaison officer to the International Control Commission. The colonel's remarks were made in an interview in Hanoi with Joergen E. Peterson, and reported in the 3 November Manchester Guardian. Lau labeled US troops as "playboys" and claimed that they had to have water flown in from Hawaii. He also asserted that the US did not have enough experienced pilots and claimed that the pilots now bail out before their planes are hit by missiles.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi on Americans Against the War: On 5 November, Hanoi International Service broadcast in English that "more and more" Americans have come out against the war. As examples, it cited an article by Linus Pauling condemning US policy in Vietnam, and a statement by US Navy pilot James C. Child, who said he had returned the air

medal he won in Vietnam because the war was "immoral and largely futile." The broadcast also took note of protest demonstrations held in US colleges against the draft and against recruiting by firms which made napalm for use in Vietnam.

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Hanoi Broadcasts Another Statement by American Visitor: On 4 November, North Vietnam broadcast another recorded statement by Tom Hayden, an American who recently visited Hanoi. Speaking in English to US troops in South Vietnam, Hayden denounced US policy in Vietnam. A similar statement by Hayden was broadcast by Hanoi on 29 October.

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